

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 07960

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, JA

SUBJECT: ASUKATA ATTACKS MODERATE PARTIES

SUMMARY: JAPAN SOCIALIST PARTY (JSP) CHAIRMAN ASUKATA HAS STRONGLY CRITICIZED BOTH NEW LIBERAL CLUB (NLC) AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST PARTY (DSP) FOR HELPING LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (LDP) STAY IN OFFICE, AND CHAIRMEN OF THOSE PARTIES HAVE REPLIED IN KIND. ASUKATA'S REMARKS WERE EVIDENTLY MEANT TO DAMPEN INTERNAL CRITICISM OF PARTY'S LACKLUSTER ROLE IN RECENT LOCAL ELECTIONS. ASUKATA HAS BEEN CAREFUL NOT TO OFFEND CLEAN GOVERNMENT PARTY (CGP) FOR FEAR OF ISOLATING JSP ON LEFT WITH COMMUNISTS. END SUMMARY.

1. ICHIO ASUKATA, NEW CHAIRMAN OF JSP, HAS BITTERLY CRITICIZED BOTH NLC AND DSP FOR SIDING WITH LDP AND THEREBY "PROLONGING" CONSERVATIVE RULE OF JAPAN. ASUKATA SINGLED OUT DSP NOT ONLY FOR FRATERNIZING WITH LDP IN
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CURRENT DIET SESSION BUT ALSO FOR SPLITTING OPPOSITION CAMP BY MAKING ARTIFICIAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN "RESPONSIBLE" OPPOSITION PARTIES AND "IRRESPONSIBLE" OPPOSITION PARTIES, INCLUDING JSP. ADDRESSING MEETING OF JSP DIETMEN FROM BOTH HOUSES ON APRIL 28, ASUKATA SAID JSP'S PARTICIPATION WITH DSP AND NLC IN RECENT LOCAL ELECTIONS (E.G., KYOTO GOVERNORSHIP AND YOKOHAMA MAYORALTY) HAD BEEN MISTAKE

AND THAT HENCEFORTH HE WOULD TRY TO ESTABLISH REGULAR DIALOGUE AND CLOSER COOPERATION WITH CHAIRMEN OF CGP AND COMMUNIST PARTIES. MOST OF PRESS TOOK LATTER STATEMENT TO MEAN JSP WOULD REPLACE ITS LONG-STANDING POLICY LINE FAVORING FORMATION OF ALL-OPPOSITION-PARTY COALITION TO REPLACE LDP WITH MORE LEFTIST LINE OF JCP-JSP-CGP, BUT ASUKATA DID NOT IN FACT GO THAT FAR.

2. OBVIOUSLY STUNG, CHAIRMEN OF BOTH NLC AND DSP ISSUED ANGRY RETORTS WITHIN HOURS OF ASUKATA'S REMARKS. NLC CHIEF KONO ISSUED BRIEF STATEMENT DEMANDING THAT ASUKATA STRIKE HIS CRITICISM FROM RECORD. DSP CHAIRMAN SASAKI ANSWERED ASUKATA AT MORE LENGTH SAYING THAT, AS LARGEST OPPOSITION PARTY, JSP SHOULD "HUMBLY REFLECT" ON FACT THAT POPULAR SUPPORT FOR OPPOSITION PARTIES, PARTICULARLY JSP, HAD STEADILY DECLINED WHILE THAT FOR LDP HAD REMAINED STABLE. SASAKI RULED OUT POSSIBILITY OF DSP'S JOINTLY SPONSORING CANDIDATE IN 1979 TOKYO GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION WITH JSP AND COMMUNISTS AND URGED JSP LEADERS TO DISASSOCIATE THEMSELVES FROM THEIR PARTY'S HARD-CORE MARX-LENINIST WING. SASAKI OFFERED, HOWEVER, TO FORGET PAST AND HOLD DIALOGUE WITH JSP IF LATTER RECONSIDERED ITS "DOGMATIC" ATTITUDES.

3. COMMENT: ASUKATA'S SUDDEN ATTACK WAS SURPRISING BECAUSE, SINCE ASSUMING OFFICE, HE HAS OFTEN STRESSED BELIEF THAT JSP SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON REBUILDING ITS OWN CONFIDENTIAL

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STRENGTH, NOT ON ITS RELATIONS WITH OTHER PARTIES. WE UNDERSTAND, HOWEVER, THAT HIS REMARKS WERE AIMED, NOT SO MUCH AT DSP AND NLC, BUT AT DISSATISFIED ELEMENTS WITHIN HIS OWN PARTY MEMBERSHIP. JSP'S JOINT SPONSORSHIP WITH CGP AND DSP OF THIRD PLACE LOSER IN KYOTO RACE AND ITS BELATED AND LAME JOINING OF NON-COMMUNIST COALITION IN SUPPORT OF WINNING YOKOHAMA MAYORAL CANDIDATE HAVE CAUSED MOUNTING DISCONTENT AMONG PARTY'S RANK-AND-FILE, MOST OF WHOM ARE YOUNG, LEFT-LEANING AND WANT PARTY TO OBSERVE ITS MARXIST IDEALS. WITH MAJOR LOCAL ELECTIONS FOR THIS YEAR OUT OF WAY, ASUKATA EVIDENTLY THOUGHT HE WOULD THROW BONE TO PARTY ACTIVISTS BY PUTTING DISTANCE BETWEEN JSP AND CENTRISTS. WE NOTE THAT IN DOING SO, ASUKATA WAS CAREFUL TO LEAVE DOOR WIDE OPEN FOR CONTINUED CASE-BY-CASE COOPERATION WITH BOTH NLC AND DSP IN DIET. FURTHERMORE, FROM FACT THAT ASUKATA DID NOT INCLUDE CGP IN HIS ATTACKS, WE ARE SUPPOSING THAT HE IS TRYING TO PREVENT CGP FROM DRIFTING ANY FURTHER TO RIGHT TOWARD DSP, WITH WHICH IT HAS LOOSE FORM OF "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP." JSP LEADERSHIP IS SAID TO FEAR REDUCTION OF ITS TIES WITH CGP BECAUSE JSP WOULD THEN FIND ITSELF ON FAR LEFT OF POLITICAL SPECTRUM, ISOLATED WITH COMMUNISTS. WHATEVER ASUKATA'S MOTIVES,

NOTION OF ALL OPPOSITION PARTY COALITION, ALWAYS A WILL-O-
WISP, HAS BECOME EVEN MORE UNLIKELY AND PUBLIC IMPRESSION
THAT JSP STANDS INCREASINGLY ALONE WITH JCP ON LEFT HAS
BEEN FOSTERED. SHERMAN

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